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Wilton Park



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Report

Balanced economies, balanced societies: promoting gender parity in politics and business

Sunday 13 – Tuesday 15 November 2016 | WP1501

In association with:



**WOMEN
OF THE
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Programme





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Executive summary

- 2016 marked the third year of this summit focussing on gender equality at Wilton Park. The summit also marked the beginning of #weekofwomen, consisting of a series of international events organised by the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Drawing on the findings of the previous two summits, this year's meeting was designed to move beyond the well-established debates of why gender equality is important for political and economic development. The focus was to instead determine core principles and practice for increasing gender equality, to architect policy recommendations, and identify opportunities.
- With this shift in focus to one of practical endeavour, the output from the meeting ranged from relaying stories of cultural barriers to progress, to the sharing of best practice, and the identification of necessary tools and resources. A section of the event also consisted of workshops in which principles and plans for action were produced. These are sketched out later in the report.
- The group profile consisted of 64 delegates, providing representation from the fields of politics, ministerial government, finance, entrepreneurs, activists, academics, charities and wider corporate business. All genders were represented, along with cross-generational input. Geographical and cultural coverage included perspectives and voices from Australia, Oceania, Middle East, Central Asia, South East Asia, Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, Central America & the Caribbean, and South America..

Wider context

- With 2015 marking the end of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, a new vision was launched in 2016 to build on previous work: The United Nations Development Programme Sustainable Development Goals.
- Recognising the central role that gender equality must play in securing a sustainable future for all, and for achieving the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the UN Secretary General created a High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment to directly confront barriers to achieving this sustainable goal. The panel outlined seven drivers for tackling the changes required, along with seven guiding principles to assist with facilitating the changes over the following fifteen years:

Seven drivers	Seven principles
Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models	No woman left behind
Ensuring legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws and regulations	Nothing done for women without women
Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care	Equal focus on right and gains
Building assets - Digital, financial and property	Tackle root causes
Changing business culture and practice	State parties must respect international human rights and labour standards
Improving public sector practices in employment and procurement	Partnerships are critical
Strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation	Deliver globally

- The informal, non-hierarchical, and intimate setting of Wilton Park provided delegates with a space in which to discuss their own diverse and far-reaching experiences of working on gender equality agendas in business, politics and beyond. The environment was conducive for facilitating the establishment and extension of networks, and for the open sharing of opinion.
- As the following report demonstrates, these shared experiences and opinions appear to clearly reflect the UNDP's identified drivers and principles for action. In short, there is alignment and agreement at local, national, and international levels regarding the scale of the task of achieving gender equality and economic empowerment, and of how this can be best achieved.

Themes and highlights

- Safe spaces - required for all genders, to discuss gender discrimination, bias and barriers.
- Collaboration - path to progress is all about inclusion - inclusivity of all genders is essential.
- Lack of inclusivity leads to limited, short-term and precarious progress - progress is not linear.
- Use of pluralist data is essential - but critically engaging with it is of paramount importance.
- Share the care - progress in the public domain is being fundamentally curbed by poor progress in gender equality in the private domain.
- Equality goes beyond quantity: Quotas and quantities only go so far. Equal standards and equal treatment are lacking due to deep-seated social and cultural codes.
- Male champions are crucial for progress - collaboration and inclusivity are central to success
- Rolling out the role-models - high visibility of success is crucial for inspiring the aspiring.
- Changing the narratives - a need to use real anecdotal evidence to update the vision.

Main themes in detail

1. Safe space and access

- Safe space is central to success - for all. Clear examples provided included the success story of Women's Entrepreneurial Centers of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) - a U.S Department of State initiative. This model for success has been rolled out in other nation states, including Zambia and Pakistan, with similar success.
- Safe spaces have multiple uses - WECREATE spaces end up doubling up as community centre to address other issues such as gender based violence.
- Safe spaces also provide a safe space for mentors too, a meeting place.
- Spaces become places in which resources can be consolidated, where partnering with other local organisations has more chance of success.
- Safe spaces become a place for connecting women with women in other business, and tapping into supply chains.
- Women lack a 'space of one's own' in which to succeed.
- Spaces take on many manifestations. They can be establishing a women's bank, as successfully reported from Ethiopia. The Women's Bank took four years to establish, with excellent success rates.
- The need for safe virtual space was raised on a number of occasions. The online radicalisation of young masculinity through hard core pornography was emphasised. Gender equality in the virtual space needs more attention.
- A safe space for women's economic empowerment can also be an online space, such as the successful WECONNECT scheme, connecting women entrepreneurs with capital.

2. Data (including quotas)

- The need to frame arguments with supporting data is central, but critical engagement with the data is essential: quants alone are never enough. Pluralist data should be used - qualitative and quantitative. The need to use narrative was underscored - individual stories of inequality matter.
- Conceptual consistency is fundamental. In the example of looking into data regarding the tech industry, the issues of comparing like with like was raised - Finding comparable data is tricky - is a back end coder the same as a front end coder? These conceptual issues matter.
- Beware the mismatch - personal anecdotes often do not support the initially reported experience. There is a mismatch between the media message and personal experience. Examples can tell a different story - the importance of mining the data for specific examples to validate claims is central. Initial opinion does not reflect reality.
- A useful six point plan for good practice data use was outlined: (i) Longitudinal change works well - one off data captures present an incomplete picture (ii) think through the end goals (iii) take into account that the data may go in an unexpected direction - have a theory (iv) Be clear about your comparisons (v) share your data, and (vi) take into account bias in your tools - consider the foundational data used to programme.
- The sharing and dissemination of data clearly has an important role to play - but as before, its interrogation for the wider story will transform outcomes. Data leads to action. One example is the World Bank Group's 2016 report 'Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal'. The report shows that of 173 economies analysed, across 7 indicators, 90% still have at least one legal

restriction in place which could inhibit the equal economic empowerment of women, through either education, restrictions on occupations, access to identity documents limiting access to finance, or making starting a business difficult. Progress has been made over the past two years, with 94 legal reforms taking place over 65 economies. Whilst the data has led to reform, it can only go so far. What it has exposed is the strength of social and cultural codes over legal structures, and a bias in the judiciary structures.

- The role of data influencing and directing social change, of use of data to set policy and bring about social trends was emphasised. A Chinese example was provided of how the one child policy, in light of current economic conditions, has brought about gender equality and a change in social attitudes. With increasing house prices in China, teamed with the social convention that men must buy houses before marrying, 63.2% of Chinese families now report being happier with girls than reflected in previous data.
- Storytelling - How do we generate data which will tell a story? Detail must not be discarded, emotions must be heard.
- Collection of data: The Ugandan context was highlighted as an example of issues both accessing and collecting data. Technological constraints must be more widely acknowledged.
- Production of data - coding for girls and gender equity - Young men are writing the algorithms of our futures. Technology companies are starting to look like the new banking - young men tend to run these companies. Better board representation is required.
- How is the success of entrepreneurs measured - beyond profit - how do we deal with this? Social entrepreneurship takes social innovation at its core - not just profit. We need to expand what success looks like and measure value beyond financial value.
- The importance of drilling down into data was highlighted again by headline reports that 20% of the Tunisian government are women, but only 5% are in parliament.

On quotas specifically

- No agreement was reached on quotas - they are often seen as being beneficial for increasing initial representation (short-term) but do not tackle the societal structures underpinning equality. Female representation in politics can be undermined by the removal of women once power has been achieved - or the side-lining of women into certain roles. Examples included Kyrgyzstan, where 30% quotas assist in getting women into power, but they are then slowly removed once elected.
- An example of the need for detailed data was highlighted through the use of quotas. It is the positions of decision making power that matter - not just the critical mass. The combination of both is crucial for gauging success and progress. The Caribbean currently has one of the highest participation rates at board level globally - 59.3% of high management positions - but despite this there is still low representation at high level decision making. Disproportionate care work, the struggle of balancing 'two jobs' and persistent socio-cultural and patriarchal norms are all given reasons. Combined with this are endemic issues of domestic violence and the second highest rate of HIV globally.
- Quotas of 30 % are seen as deflating. They need to be set at 50%, in order for equity to have true reflection.

3. Share the care

- 'Carrying the private burden into the public space'. People are holistic. As is society. The private/public divide, and the focus on ensuring equality in the public domain, does not confront the underlying problem of inequality in the domestic space. There is a very real threat that continuing inequality in the private domain is (and will) undermine and derail progress in the public domain.
- Quotas for care work: Exploring the possibility that quotas could work to balance caring responsibilities. This could start to address the roll-on effect of role-models. It could also prevent the real possibility of roll-back of gender equality. As with current initiatives for women in STEM, how do we support men to enter the caring industry?

Cultural contexts of caring

- In the African context, the realisation of the family responsibilities that women carry is huge. In Tunisia specifically, it was reported that women spend 8x more time on caring responsibilities than men.
- Beware the cultural degradation of care: The narrative of care as a burden is highly problematic. Caring for children, elders, and the less able, needs to be recognised as an activity of equal worth. The degradation of care is complex. It's low or unpaid status and persistent adherence as a highly gendered activity, are both contributory and resultant factors. Caring needs emulating, it needs to be given the full recognition it deserves.
- The colonial inheritance of cultural codes needs full acknowledgement - of which the degradation of care may be one.
- That which constitutes care is set within complex cultural context. Care can be fetching water and fire wood, being a primary caregiver to young and old, catering for a large extended family. The range of nuance and breadth of potential solutions needs to be accommodated.

4. Cultural barriers: Religious, social and cultural legislation - family, peer and societal pressure

- Implicit gender codes and social norms have the stronghold: Women may be in the room, and around the table - but not on the same terms as men. In Tunisian politics there is a struggle to collaborate with male colleagues because strong opinions from women are frowned upon and pushed away. Women are not supposed to interrupt male MP's because of respect for men. Opinions are seen as a masculine characteristic, not as feminine.
- The use of social intimidation is rife. Women are 'put back in 'their place' and 'reminded of family responsibilities'.

Gatekeepers of own gender

- There needs to be a more explicit awareness that we are 'gatekeepers of own gender'. The reinforcement of gender roles and expectations often come from one's own gender. Women do not talk amongst themselves about cultural stigmas and barriers - about how they demotivate and create barriers for each-other. The silence on this matter must be stopped and voices heard. The reproduction of gender inequality by women must be confronted too. Again, a new narrative is required.
- Examples of the strength of own-gender barrier reinforcement were universal. In Tunisia, 40.6% of women are against paternity leave. In Kyrgyzstan - the expansion of expectations or broadening of horizons is discouraged. There is a social silencing. In the Lebanon, the legislation of women exists well outside the judiciary - in strong religious laws and codes. Legal challenges happen

overnight. Social change takes decades.

- Removed reflection: It is often easier to confront inequality with strangers than to deal with it in one's own immediate situation. Confidence and courage are essential to overcoming this, and revealing one's own vulnerability.
- When considering cultural barriers, we must take into account regional differences and urban/rural variations. Cultural barriers are heavily nuanced.
- There is a confidence issue and a constant quest for perfection with girls/women: "We are enough. Now let's run for office!" "The skills that women need to be leaders are knocked out of them as girls - speak up and ask questions! Boys rush into decisions because society supports them to do so".
- Confidence is vital - positive role models who can demonstrate that fear of failure can be overcome, and that failing is as much a part of the process of entrepreneurship as winning, are crucial. There is currently a toxic mix of fear of failure and lack of confidence. Fake it before you make it: develop the willingness to take the risk.
- Inequality is still evident in education. Children are being fed gendered ideas about occupations. More girls need educating, and educating equally. Inclusivity is essential: Reframe the question: 'It should not be, what do you want to be when you grow up - it should be what problem do you want to solve? And 'How many other people can I get to win too'. It is no longer about being the best on your own. This is outdated and destructive.
- Dealing with culturally manufactured difference: Confronting the arguments that males and females have profound differences - these arguments only seek to shore up token representation ie we just need one woman on the Board, then they are all represented.
- Culturally normed sexual harassment in the work place represents a core cultural barrier to women's economic empowerment. It limits opportunity and diminishes confidence.

5. Male champions of change

- The role of men in delivering gender parity is central to its success. The construction of masculinity relies on a stereotype of femininity (and vice versa), and of who women are. A means to achieving gender parity is confronting these stereotypes, which are often at the root of gender equity issues such as gender based violence.
- A UK based charity which runs workshops in schools with boys between the ages of 12-18 is making inroads into tackling stereotypes. The workshop crucially offers a non-judgemental space. The boys are asked to reflect on their own stereotypes, and to consider how these engage with and reflect their own reality. By breaking down misconceptions and exposing the dangers of adhering to stereotypes, participants can start to be self-reflexive about their actions and behaviour, and how these stereotypes will affect their future lives. Connections between the inability and fear to express emotions and mental health are made - the leading cause of death in the UK for men under 40 is suicide. If you don't talk, you solve problems with violence, you react with anger. The positivity which comes from being able to empathise with the world is outlined. The project has received extremely positive feedback. Boys are open to the issue - there is a distinct appetite for this. They report feeling listened to, respected, safe, and relieved. It is important to note that saying the space feels safe and open is not a typically masculine thing to say. The effects are immediate.
- A central goal of the workshops is to introduce the boys to the idea of 'Democratic masculinities' - ie that there is more than one variation from which

they can choose. Gender is a social construct, a social system, often best viewed as a spectrum of choice. Another goal is to make them aware that masculinity is rigidly policed - and policed at a young age. That fear reinforces masculinity. A fear of expressing emotion. A central tenet is that 'my liberation as a man is tied to your liberation as a woman'. 'Saying masculinity is in crisis is like saying racism is in crisis'. Is this a masculinity we want to save? It should be noted that gender sensitization programmes were also reported to exist in a number of other locations, including Croatian schools.

- As a number of countries move into a service based economy and become deindustrialized, and if men continue to grow up thinking a 'masculine job' is required - with care being beneath them, this construction of masculinity clearly has enormous implications for economic development. Men need to look for alternative professions, and the ability to do this is tied into constructions of masculinity. There is then a need for a new narrative: What do boys/men do who do not want to engage in stereotypical masculinity?

Camaraderie, not competition

- The gender related issues and struggles men face must be acknowledged too. Camaraderie is built on shared experience. There needs to be a change of rhetoric from 'competition and fight for equality', to 'challenge of facilitating equality'. Social issues such as single fatherhood need further accommodation. The links between low uptake on parental leave by men and rigid constructions of masculinity need to be explored in greater depth.
- Male involvement in gender equality campaigns are sometimes a result of becoming fathers of daughters. This change of perspective and the recognition of the unfair treatment, objectification, harassment etc. that women are subjected to prompts action. Awakening this 'relational realisation' in men has potential. It could stimulate further activity and encourage more male champions of change.
- A move towards paritarian democracy is required. Gender equality is the responsibility of all genders. All genders suffer when there is inequality. There is a need to address the 'What's in it for me - why should I lose my place? We need to structure the argument as an increase of the pie, not just redistribution'. In the Bolivian context, there is a view that current gender hostility leads to constant institutional agitation - initiatives are not given enough time to take effect. Improved gender relations and a reframing of the core arguments of 'benefit for all' need to lead to getting 'men on side', and feeling less threatened.
- Gender equality needs more male champions and mentors. Not male competition.

6. New narratives, new visions

- Role models are needed - to generate courage and confidence, to kindle the imagination. The importance of role models, for inspiring imagination is crucial. Upon hearing the acceptance speech of the Marsh Award by XXX, one young visitor to Wilton Park was noticeably moved and inspired. We are motivated to action by our emotions, and our relations with others.
- A diverse environment confronts stereotypes head-on and rewrites the story. The challenge to commit and keep recommitting is essential for shaping a new narrative.
- 'A chairwoman. What is this? It sounds odd' - Be vigilant; language puts boundaries around our imaginations. Conceptual agitation is also required. Remember: Gender inequality wrote history and an implicit power dynamic exists in language.
- Rewriting the story of power - changing perceptions of power: If power is

perceived as negative and unethical, there will be less inclination to become involved and 'tarnish' a reputation.

- It is crucial to find your own voice, to tell your own story. Reflect on own experience and reality - be vigilant of repeating tropes and reproducing stereotypes. Unconscious bias is universal.
- The core importance of presenting possibility through role models was given in the context of Uganda: To cultivate the vision, kindle the imagination, broaden the horizon - role models are crucial for developing and changing the narrative, and for dismantling the barriers of stereotypes.

7. Commitments and plans for action: Advocacy, action, policy: Workshop principles

- Three workshops were coordinated, focussing on themes of increasing gender parity in (i) entrepreneurship, (ii) the workplace and (iii) politics. All shared the goals of producing principles for parity rather than solutions (ie avoiding defining who, where, what and how). Groups were also tasked with developing new narratives to support and substantiate the principles where possible, to exemplify the theme of a recognised need for new narratives running throughout the summit.
- **Gender equity in entrepreneurship:** The discussion was framed around the potential and importance of delivering economic empowerment and gender equality through entrepreneurship. Top level data was used to situate this potential, highlighting that 78% of employment in developing countries is delivered through a collection of small enterprises, constituted as: 20-30m formal SME's, 225-270m micro enterprises and 285-345m enterprises in the 'informal economy'. The premise that there is a palpable shift from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) towards SME's was prevalent throughout the session. An onus was placed on determining five principles for ensuring gender equality amongst entrepreneurs, summarised as:
 - I. Your network is your net worth
(narrative: success story of a 50cent pocket money loan scheme whose 800 informal worker clientele was accessed via existing web of relations)
 - II. Equitable and transparent resource allocation: Collaborative and inclusive negotiation will determine allocation
(narrative: The smallest scale enterprises are owned by women who have 2% of resources - story of Ugandan female agricultural entrepreneurs with little access to rice, or poor distribution of resources for them to develop business).
 - III. The concept of what constitutes entrepreneurship and who entrepreneurs are (and can be), ie all genders, must be shared. It must be universal - to create a level playing field. Just as the concept of leadership has been critically overhauled for implicit gender bias, so must entrepreneurship. This will widen horizons, helping with self-identification, making connections to success.
 - IV. Capacity building to access markets: Developing supply chains.
 - V. Improved access to public infrastructure of entrepreneurship: Access to knowledge to avoid failure: 80-95% of enterprises fail. Often this can be traced to insufficient financial knowledge and training, due to poor access to both. Increased availability of data, advice and mentoring is essential to assist with the financial aspects of enterprise management. The gender bias often inherent in the financial sector must be addressed, including implications which can manifest as limitations: who will lend to who, etc.

- **Gender equity in the workplace.**
The goal of bringing to fruition a vision of a utopian organisation with gender equity in both employee representation and remuneration (equal pay for equal work) guided the following five principles to create such a space:
 - I. Equal pay for equal work
 - II. Equal opportunities for all
 - III. Equal access to flexible and or dynamic working styles
 - IV. Diversity and inclusion embedded into all aspects of the organisation - embed what is treasured so it can be measured
 - V. Zero tolerance of harassment in the workplace - designing a respectful and safe workplace for everyone.
- Emphasis was placed on - developing an inclusive culture; the provision of training to identify and manage implicit bias; ensuring inclusive recruitment pipelines; offering parental leave; ensuring equitable distribution of all tasks; transparent processes regarding pay and promotion, and offering leadership and confidence building programmes.
- **Gender equity in politics**
Four potential channels for delivering increased gender equity in politics were recognised: (i)Increasing representation in politics; (ii)tackling women's representation in the political media; (iii)policy formation, and (iv)effective policy delivery. Focus was placed on the first: increasing gender equity in representation by encouraging participation by female candidates. Five principles are pathways to success were outlined:
 - I. Addressing the profile of political power and presenting it as a positive ambition was central: that power is a positive thing to aspire to, facilitating positive change. A new narrative needs to be created, one that counteracts a dominant view of power as subject to corruption, or as something which corrupts.
 - II. The new narrative must constitute a story around representation. It must be evidence based, and use social norming. Role models must be demonstrated at all levels of political engagement (local and national), both in government, and also showing political participation actively critiquing government.
 - III. Emotional reasons must be addressed, tracing the emotional story from inspiring choice → realising possibility and capability → becoming a role model → representing others and assisting them to inspire choice. Of being true to cause.
 - IV. Core principles for increasing gender equality in political representation are communicating possibility and choice. The recognition of capacity to participate is crucial. As is stoking the desire to aspire.

8. Other recommendations and suggested principles

- The potential to name and shame, in business and politics. Penalties were also considered, potentially including tax breaks, or perhaps through individual financial targets via personal bonus structures.
- The reorganisation of public and private sector procurement was encouraged - by identifying supply chains through which economic power can be used to deliver economic gender equality.
- Full agreement was reached that all individuals must make consistent use of personal and professional networks for leverage.

- Putting resource behind the rhetoric - 'It is a matter of political will' - when potential votes are at stake, gender equality becomes centre stage of the political agenda. It must be kept centre stage.
- Solidarity not solitude is central to success. Keeping connected and feeding back stories of impact. Change needs to take place at all levels, local, national and international. Knowing how the contributing parts constitute the aggregate is crucial for motivation, determination and inspiration.
- To ensure momentum and commitment, delegates were asked to pledge their commitment to aligning their efforts with the UNDP seven guiding principles, as listed at the beginning of the report. The majority of the group agreed to do so, both tapping into the institutional potential and using the High Level Panel as an engine for change.

9. Conclusions

- Speedy universal agreement was reached on the importance of the space that the Wilton Park summit offers. The facilitative nature of the session, the chance to connect with other 'gender ambassadors' and 'gender warriors', and feel less isolated in one's own work was underscored. The summit provided the opportunity to regenerate, refresh and re-inspire - all important when one's objective is constructively confronting dominant power mechanisms.
- Recognition and realisation of one's sphere of influence was underscored: Everyone has the capacity to be a role model. Setting and being the precedent takes courage, confidence, and long-term commitment.
- Solutions will not be found in silos. It is imperative that Government, civil society and private sector all work together. Considering the diverse representation at the summit, it was unanimously agreed that collaboration is the most important factor. This cuts across all the other goals.
- Concluding with the theme of collaboration and inclusion across all genders. All genders will benefit - economically, socially and emotionally. This message must be consistently reiterated, because 'to a privileged group, equality can feel like oppression'. Full participation is crucial for full cooperation. Leave no-one behind.

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